

CONSUMER INFORMATION FROM USDA

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Revised May 1999

Expectant Mothers and Foodborne Illness

The Special Concern

Expectant mothers and those preparing food for them should be especially diligent when following safe food handling recommendations.

Any illness a pregnant woman contracts can affect her unborn child whose immune system is too immature to fight back.

Advice for Expectant Mothers:

- NEVER eat raw meat, such as steak tartare (a raw hamburger dish), poultry or seafood (especially raw oysters and clams).
- DON'T EAT raw or undercooked eggs and any food containing them such as Caesar salad, mousse, some custards, homemade ice cream and homemade mayonnaise.
- DON'T DRINK raw or unpasteurized milk or foods made from raw milk.
- DON'T EAT soft cheeses such as feta, Brie, Camembert, blue and Mexican style soft white types as Queso Blanco and Queso Fresco.
- AVOID food from deli counters and thoroughly reheat lunch meats and hot dogs.
- Make sure food is thoroughly cooked.
- Before eating stuffing cooked inside whole poultry, be sure it has reached 165° F.

Listeria monocytogenes

These foodborne bacteria can cause a miscarriage, and also, illness in newborns. Listeria has been found in unpasteurized milk, imported soft cheese, hot dogs, lunch meats and spreads.

To control listeria, refrigerate any food marked "refrigerate." Don't buy or use foods that are past their "use-by" dates.

Don't keep sealed, unopened lunch meats or spreads more than two weeks after you buy them. And use or discard open packages in 3 to 4 days.

Cook Thoroughly

Use a thermometer to be sure foods reach 160° F to destroy any bacteria present. Whole poultry should reach 180° F; breasts, 170° F.

Eggs should be cooked solid, both yolk and white.

Call Toll-free For More Information

**USDA Meat and Poultry
Hotline**

1 (800) 535-4555

Washington DC (202) 720-3333

Safe Food Handling

- SHOPPING. Don't buy cans or glass jars with dents, cracks or bulging lids. This can be a sign the food contains harmful microorganisms.
- COLD STORAGE. Choose perishable foods last before checkout at the grocery. Go straight home and refrigerate or freeze the food immediately. Use an appliance thermometer to be sure the refrigerator (40° F) and freezer (0° F) keep food at safe temperatures.

Store canned goods in a cool, dry place for use within a year. Never put them above the stove, under the sink or in a garage or damp basement.

- THAWING. Don't thaw food on the counter! Bacteria multiply quickly at room temperature. Defrost food in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave just before cooking.
- FOOD PREPARATION. Keep work areas clean. Wash hands, utensils and cutting boards in warm, soapy water before and after preparing food or handling raw meat or poultry.

Both wooden and plastic cutting boards can be sanitized with a solution of 1 teaspoon chlorine bleach per quart of water.

- SERVING & HANDLING FOOD. NEVER leave food out at room temperature more than 2 hours. Divide food into shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator. Promptly refrigerate it.

For buffets, keep cold food cold or hot food hot, and everything clean.